

From: amy.c.elliott@gmail.com on behalf of Amy Elliott Bragg <amyelliottbragg@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 11:00 AM
To: 
Subject: OPPOSED to House Bill 5233 and Senate Bill 720

Hi Mary Lou,

I'm writing today to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendments to Public Act 169. These amendments will significantly weaken historic district protection in our communities.

Despite misleading rhetoric to the contrary about "local control," this legislation actually gives more control to wealthy developers and lobbyists while making the general public's input about development decisions in historic districts less important. And it dismisses the expertise of our historic designation boards and district commissions, which are generally comprised of members of the public who have some expertise in architecture, history, urban planning, and preservation, as well as real estate professionals and developers. There's no need for Lansing to tell local governments how to staff their historic designation boards. We already know how to do that in the way that best serves our community's needs.

Historic preservation has been characterized as the work of "activists." In fact, historic preservation is good for everyone in Michigan: it creates more vibrant neighborhoods, fosters a strong sense of place and belonging, makes our communities more attractive to tourism, talent, and businesses, and generates real investment, jobs, and economic development. This process does not need to be "modernized." It is already a valuable modern tool for reinvestment and growth in our communities. This amendment will make it harder for historic preservation to work and provide those benefits.

I am a young, educated, highly civically engaged person who stays in Michigan because of its history, because of the rich historic character of its communities, and because it is a beautiful place, even though I could find better job opportunities, better transit infrastructure, better schools for my kids, and certainly better weather elsewhere. This legislation will take away one more thing that keeps young people in place and will contribute to brain drain and out-state migration.

Thank you,

Amy Bragg

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